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was always running in his head. The opera of *Sylvana*, altered from the *Dumb Girl of the Forest*, had been already commenced, and he had also received the words of the operetta *Abu Hassan*. But concert-giving left him little time for real work in composition; and Caroline Brandt's pretty fairy-like form and winning manner had already caused him many sleepless nights. At Frankfort she was cast for the part of the dumb girl in *Sylvana*, and although by her artless conception of the part she completed the conquest over the young composer, the opera went for nothing, in consequence of the balloon ascent of Madame Blanchard taking place on the same day.

Name and fame were gathering round the young artist; but the restless spirit inherited from his father seemed to doom him to a life of perpetual wandering. At one time we hear of him at Prague, at another at Munich, sometimes as conductor of the opera, and sometimes merely giving concerts, few of which appear to have been profitable. He also became a powerful critic on the compositions of others; and, above all, employed himself diligently on a novel called "The Wanderings of a Musical Artist." The news of the death of his father, whom he had left at Mannheim, came upon him in the first flush of his success, after the production of *Sylvana* at Berlin. As a proof of his affection, in his note-book stand these words, "He fell asleep at last, they say. May heaven grant him in another world the rest he knew not here! It is an almost intolerable pain to me to think that I have not been able to bestow upon him happier days. May God, in his mercy, bless him for all the love he bore me—all the love I so little deserved—and for the education he bestowed on me."

That Weber was now more earnest in his art may be ascribed to two reasons. In the first place he had already felt the depressing effects of the reckless life into which he had plunged, almost in his boyish years; and in the second place his pure love for Caroline Brandt led him to seek for some permanent position where he might offer her a home as his wife. At Dresden, at length, this opportunity presented itself. A German Opera was to be established, and Weber was appointed "Capellmeister to His Majesty the King of Saxony."

As yet the real strength of Carl Maria von Weber was unknown to the world; *Sylvana* and *Abu Hassan* contained much that made itself felt with those capable of judging; but the genius that conceived *Der Freischütz* had not yet revealed itself—had not perhaps matured itself, as all genius must before it can speak in the full majesty of its power. We have now arrived at a point when Weber was boldly concentrating his whole energy upon the establishment of a German Opera that should be an honour to Dresden. His engagement to Caroline

Brandt concludes the first volume of this interesting biography. We shall afterwards see how nobly he fulfilled his duties to art; and how much the sunny influence of his betrothed aided him in a task beset with no ordinary difficulties.

(To be continued.)

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.

No event of material interest has taken place at this establishment during the past month. The season commenced on the 28th of March, with Gounod's *Faust*, Madlle. Berini, from La Scala, Milan, sustaining the part of *Marguerite*, and Madlle. Honoré that of *Siebel*. If not destined to hold the highest rank on the operatic stage, Madlle. Berini is a singer and actress of no mean pretension; and, although necessarily subject to comparisons with the many *Marguerites* who had preceded her, she achieved a well-merited success, and is likely, we think, in other parts, to obtain even a higher share of public favour. Madlle. Honoré sang well; but with a voice which did not win its way to the sympathy of the hearers. Herr Wachtel and Signor Mario have returned to us, the former singing with more, and the latter with less, power than we could have desired. In *Faust*, however, Signor Mario almost revived the glories of his former days. Always an artist, he not only knows his strength, but his weakness; and we doubt whether a more perfect representative of the part can, even now, be found upon the stage. The revival of *Le Prophète* introduced us to a Madlle. Von Edelsberg in the part of *Fides*; a character rendered so unapproachable by Madame Viardot's acting and singing as to make it one of the worst to select for a *débüt*. In the cathedral scene, however, Madlle. Von Edelsberg showed very high histrionic, as well as vocal powers; and although the voice contains but a limited number of notes perfectly under her command, she sang the whole of this trying scene with sufficient energy to rouse the proverbially cold audience to something like a real expression of satisfaction. Madlle. Sonieri (who was too nervous to be fairly judged on her *débüt* as *Mathilde* in *Guillaume Tell*) made a very favourable impression in *Bertha*, although we cannot quite reconcile ourselves to a certain exaggeration of style which seems too firmly rooted to be capable of alteration.

MR. HENRY LESLIE'S CHOIR.

THE second subscription concert this season, on the 30th of March, was one of the very best yet given. The programme was exclusively composed of sacred music; and in addition to some well selected works expressly designed to display the powers of this admirably trained choir, several solos of the utmost interest were given. Mr. H. Leslie's new compositions were a Lenten Anthem, "O have mercy upon me," which is written in that usually quiet and unobtrusive style which distinguishes all his sacred works, where he relies, as he always should do, solely upon himself; and a part-song, called "The Pilgrims," unquestionably one of the most charming bits of choral writing that has yet proceeded from his pen. This piece produced, as it deserved to do, one of the genuine effects of the evening, and was unanimously enjoyed, in spite of its three verses. Mr. J. Barnby's Anthem "As we have borne," is thoroughly devotional in its style, and well laid out for the voices, without the undue pretension which we too often meet with in this class of music. An eight-part Anthem by Dr. Bennett, "In thee, O Lord," is so short as to lead us to imagine it to be but a portion of a composition of larger pretension. What there is makes us desire that this composer would give us more sacred music than he has yet done. The selections from Gounod's *Mass*, for male voices, prove beyond doubt that secular music has not entirely absorbed

his attention; although we dare to question (unlike some of his worshippers) the measure of his powers in sacred writing. The "O Salutaris" of this Mass would redeem many smaller works from oblivion; but the effect of the entire selection thus submitted for judgment is that there is a want of that noble grandeur—albeit produced by simple means—which distinguishes the undying works of this character bequeathed to us by the great writers for the Roman Catholic Church. Mendelssohn's Psalm "Hear my prayer" was welcome, as it always is; but Madame Parepa has scarcely that religious fervour in her fine voice which is necessary to raise us for awhile from earth; and with the remembrance of the angelic tones of Madame Goldschmidt in the same composition, this want was doubly felt. Mr. Sims Reeves's noble interpretation of "Deeper and deeper still," is so perfect as to render criticism powerless. We doubt whether this fine recitative, with its following heavenly air, "Waft her, angels," has ever been so admirably given. The singing of the choir throughout the evening was faultless, the minutest effects of tone being observed, as if produced by one voice. We have not space to particularize some well-written part-songs of Henry Smart and Brinley Richards; but it is surprising why so beautiful a canon as Cherubini's "Adoremus," for three *soprani*, should be so little known amongst amateurs. The effect of a concert so admirably selected and executed will be to materially elevate the character of these performances in the estimation of the musical public.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE principal solo performers at these attractive concerts have been Miss Agnes Zimmermann, whose execution of Mendelssohn's First Concerto was such as to justify all we have already said in her praise, and a young violinist named Van Grann who possesses powers which must, if properly directed, lead to the highest results. But the great event of the month has been the production of Beethoven's Choral Symphony, which was listened to with a breathless attention which must have fully repaid the indefatigable conductor, Herr Manns, for his unwearied exertions in the good cause. That a philosophical work like the Ninth Symphony should produce any powerful demonstration of approval with a Crystal Palace audience can scarcely perhaps be expected by the most sanguine enthusiast in art; but there can be no question that this (with all the latest compositions of Beethoven) must gradually make its way with those who believe that music can be used as a vehicle for the expression of the profoundest thought. The execution of this wonderful work by the Crystal Palace Band was extremely good throughout, the stringed instruments especially attacking the difficult passages with the utmost decision and accuracy. The Adagio—one of the most exquisite even of Beethoven's slow movements—was sung by all the instruments to perfection; and the final Ode to Joy, although perhaps wanting in that jubilant feeling which the subject demands, was carefully executed both by voices and orchestra. So rarely is this work heard in England with a chorus and principal voices of the highest order, and thoroughly trained, by sufficient rehearsals, to give expression to its minutest details, that we are bound to criticise its performance on this occasion by comparison with others, and not by any abstract ideal of perfection. Herr Manns may, therefore, conscientiously congratulate himself upon having done his very best with the materials at his command; and more especially with having advanced one step higher in the position to which he has, by his artistic zeal and energy, raised the character of the concerts over which he presides. The solo parts were well sustained by Madame Parepa, Miss Julia Elton, Mr. Cummings, and Mr. Lewis Thomas; and the choir was considerably augmented for the occasion.

COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS.

THE concluding lecture of the session was delivered by Walter B. Gilbert, Esq., Mus. Bac. Oxon, at the Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, "On Church Organists, Past and Present, their Duties, Responsibilities, &c." The aim of Mr. Gilbert was evidently to show that the organist does not hold that high position in public estimation which the importance of his office should command. In the course of the lecture some very judicious remarks on the training of choirs were introduced; and Mr. Gilbert, who evidently has the subject thoroughly at heart, pleaded eloquently for the necessity of all who have the direction of such choirs discharging their duties with earnestness and conscientiousness. The lecture was listened to with much interest throughout.

STORE STREET.—The West London Sacred Choral Society gave its second concert on the 27th of March, when the *Messiah* was performed to a large and attentive audience. The solo parts were sustained by Miss Annette Hirst, Mr. Burgess, Miss Palmer Lisle, Mr. Whiffin, and Mr. Ralph Wilkinson; and the Oratorio was conducted by Mr. H. C. Freeman.

THE Hoxton Choral Association gave its first concert at Sussex Hall on the 18th ult.; the principal vocal performers were Miss M. A. Potter, Miss Levonison, Mr. Bray, and Mr. Murray; the instrumentalists: pianoforte, Miss Potter; violin, Mr. Hawks, jun. Mr. H. Piper officiated as conductor, and Mr. Murray led the band.

THE members of St. Alphage Choral Society gave their second annual concert on Wednesday evening, the 19th ult., in the Lecture Hall of the Young Men's Christian Association, Aldersgate Street. The programme consisted of solos, duets, glees, &c., the principal soloists being Miss Mina Poole, Messrs. Ling, Overall, Cheetham, Morris, &c.

MISS LIZZIE WILSON gave her evening concert in the Myddelton Hall, Islington, on the 24th ult., assisted by Madame Helen Percy, Miss Palmer Lisle, Mr. Fred Walker, Mr. Chaplin Henry, and Madame Charlotte Taskar (pianiste). Miss Wilson received several encores, amongst which we may mention a Cavatina, composed expressly for her by Mr. Alfred Mullen, entitled, "Deep in my soul." Mr. Jerrard and Mr. A. Mullen officiated as conductors.

THE annual Easter Festival concert was held in the school-room of St. Mary's, Johnson Street, Shadwell, on Tuesday evening, the 18th ult. The first part (sacred) included Spohr's Cantata, "God, Thou art great," and the second (secular) selections from Gounod's *Faust*; Balfe's *Enchantress*; Donizetti's *L'Elisir*, &c. The principal vocalists were Miss Annie Laroche, Miss Rosa Pain, Messrs. W. Bush, A. Morgan, G. Colquhoun, and F. A. Bridge, assisted by an efficient chorus. Pianoforte, Miss E. Stirling; Conductor, Mr. F. A. Bridge.

THE members of the Ebenezer Choral Society, assisted by those of the East London and other choirs, gave a concert of sacred music on Tuesday evening, the 4th ult., in the School Rooms of the Ebenezer Chapel, Shadwell. The programme consisted of selections from the *Messiah* and *Judas Maccabæus*, the principal vocal parts being entrusted to the following performers: Mrs. Marshall, Mr. S. Jay, Mr. Yearlett, Mr. Harrop, and Master W. G. Pullen. The choir, numbering with band nearly 100 performers, executed the parts allotted to them with a steadiness and precision betokening careful training, and were rewarded with frequent marks of approbation from an attentive audience. The instrumentalists also acquitted themselves in a manner that reflected considerable credit on them individually as well as on their leader, Mr. H. F. Waller. Mr. G. Pullen conducted.

A STUDENTS' concert was given at the Royal Academy of Music on the 5th ult., when a selection from Dr. Bennett's *May Queen* was given. Some of the pupils'